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CHARLES CLAYTON MORRISON, *Editor*

Pacific School of Religion Berkeley, Calif.

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Youth Confronts a New World

BY HERBERT L. WILLETT

Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's. Psalm 103:5.

WHEN young Alfred Tennyson heard a horseman, riding by his home, announce to his father the death of Lord Byron, he wrote with a nail on a stone in the dooryard, "Byron is dead," as if it were the epitaph of the universe. He could not conceive a world in which the poet had ceased to live. Many people are thinking in similar terms of the present time. The old and familiar world has disappeared. It was not a particularly ideal or congenial world, but it was one to which we were accustomed, and we had no other with which to compare it. So we were complacent. And those of us who live on this side the Atlantic were boastful. We were the latest word in nation-building. We had the most expansive seat of empire among the races. We were secure and snug in our isolation, protected by our two great allies, the guarding oceans. We were inventing and producing the necessaries demanded by all the nations, and our clever salesmen were marketing them in all lands. That picture has faded from the canvas.

In that older world money was the standard of success, of efficiency and of happiness. The New England idea of thrift was accepted as basic. To get up early in the morning, work hard all day, and save all one's earnings was the secret of prosperity. It never occurred to the thrifty laborers of the time that such a program was the very thing desired by the exploiting gentry and the high-pressure salesmen, whose business it has always been to trick the unwary into the purchase of commodities which they do not need and which they ought not to have. That theory of "thrift" has been the unvarying dogma which the plunderers have preached to the two classes from which their victims usually come, the laborers and the farmers. Meantime, on the basis of

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a financial rating the population of the United States, as of other lands, became stratified into layers or castes, with a minute minority, some two per cent, impregnably intrenched and beyond the reach of want; another thirty per cent in fairly comfortable estate, but always anxious to win through to the cloistered and protected enclosure; and the remainder of the people in constant uncertainty or in actual want. This condition of unrest has been tragically intensified by unemployment, insolvencies and the crash of trusted commercial securities. The familiar mood of American confidence and optimism has come to an end.

An Old Man's World

That was an old man's world. The important positions in industry, commerce and politics were held by men well beyond middle life. Many of them drew enormous salaries as presidents or executives of banks, insurance companies, manufacturing organizations or railroads, salaries which were far beyond their ability to justify, save that the traffic would bear the burden, and outsiders looking in were in no position to make effective protest. It was not an unusual incident to learn that salaries running from fifty thousand to a quarter of a million of dollars annually were paid to men in highly-placed offices, and the presidents, vice-presidents, general managers and "czars" of special interests who received up to fifty thousand dollars were rather commonplace. Such salaries and incomes still continue, but they have been drastically reduced in number, and are under increasingly critical and disapproving scrutiny. There is a growing conviction among intelligent people that no one is entitled to a larger income, either from inherited funds or from current receipts, than he could earn by honest and approved methods, or could wisely and helpfully administer. The spectacle of a dominant financial or social group fighting to maintain its privileged position in the midst of a repressed and exploited social order is increasingly condemned.

That was a world in which war was the accepted diversion of old men in diplomatic stations. The philosophy of Machiavelli, ably expounded in his sixteenth century work, "The Prince," gave to the world the concept of expediency as the exclusive test of international conduct. And this book appears to be still the textbook of certain types of public men who believe that success is the only test of morality, and that international conduct has nothing to do with the ordinary rules of decent conduct between individuals. These are the men who lightly contemplate the involvement of the world in fresh wars, to which they calmly send other men's sons, and witness with cheerful composure the sowing of dragons' teeth throughout Europe and the Far East. Such conditions facilitate the gaining of fortunes from the traffic in arms and munitions, the looting of oil concessions, and the appropriation of the plundered wealth of Africa, India, China and the islands of the Pacific.

In Youth is the World's Hope

The hope of an age like this, one that has witnessed the prostration of prosperity, that is experiencing the catastrophe of unemployment, that is tremulous with apprehension of fresh wars, and is in the general atmosphere of bewilderment, is in its youth. The promise of the nation and of the world in these critical days lies largely with the younger generation. Many frivolous and caustic things are said about young people. Some of them are justified. But with youth in the large lies the new world of hope and opportunity. The older order is too largely overborne by the distress of the hour. Men and women in middle life and beyond have been disillusioned by the stupid or dishonest leadership of business, the selfishness and shallowness of politics, and the arrogance and effrontery of unsocially acquired wealth. Many of them have lost their property, their courage and their faith. But with youth there is incorrigible optimism.

The best of the young people have confidence and vision. Every fresh generation sets forth on the quest of the Golden Fleece, undismayed by the failures and misadventures of the past. We must believe in them and trust them. They may try foolish experiments, and have to pay the cost. What generation has done otherwise? But they will win through, as youth has always done. New frontiers have to be explored, and they are the ones to adventure. New discoveries wait to be disclosed, and they are the discoverers. The world is as yet in its morning time, and the best of its revelations are yet to be released.

A New Leadership

This is not to affirm that youth movements as such are likely to point the way of deliverance. In large measure they have ceased to be effective. The last generation or two witnessed many such enterprises. They were of many sorts, political, industrial, social, religious. But their leadership gradually passed into older and more conservative hands, and the early enthusiasm declined. In not a few instances they have been diverted from their primary purpose, or have disappeared. Youth as a whole has declined to be segregated in small detachments and organizations, and is taking its place quietly but with insistence in the more serious business of life, and is in that degree displacing the older members of the social group. It does not need to resort to "youth movements" any more. The age of responsibility has been lowered, and young men and women are increasingly the leaders in business, education, social activity, national interests, morals, religion and international affairs. The great army of childhood and early youth continues to be the chief concern of home and church and school. But in rapidly increasing measure youth is assuming leadership. And in spite of the handicaps which for the time unemployment is throwing in its way, it is finding its place, as it must, in the world's work, and is destined to work momentous changes in the patterns of the nation's life.

It is a superb opportunity which youth confronts. Not in the great days of Greece, nor the age of imperial Rome, nor in the times of the Revival of Learning, nor in the vibrant nineteenth century did youth have such an opulent and authentic occasion for leadership and efficient service. Confucius spoke constantly regarding the need of the "superior man" in the making of a worthful people. He did not mean the successful

merchant, or the highly-placed official, or the victorious soldier, much less the "dictator." He had in mind the citizen of mental poise, of personal integrity, and of loyalty to the ideals of the family, the community and the state. That is the need of America today, and it is for such men that the nation is looking with wistful expectancy.

An eminent editor said last week: "Today we have something new to offer our young men. This is not the end of the world; only the end of folly. They may take part in one of the great moments of history, a great undertaking of the human spirit. To superior men it is a place in the sun and beneath the stars."

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This demands preparation for life. Clean and alert bodies; dignity and respect for personality; a suitable measure of education, which is easily acquired in these days of wide and inexpensive opportunity. It does not demand a college education of every young man and woman. Too many are crowding into college today with no definite purpose but to follow the custom. The patterns of education are changing rapidly, and promise conservation of time and a more competent equipment not merely for vocational success but for adjustment to the demands of family life, of a useful career and of citizenship. A vocation should be sought which is honest and congenial; which is needed by society, not already overcrowded, or merely economically promising or socially advantageous. There are too many of the white-collar professional class for whom there is no demand; too many ministers of inadequate training; too many doctors half-prepared and on the edge of starvation; far too many lawyers, an undue proportion of whom are a nuisance and a menace.

A work can easily be found such as the world needs, in the area of education, of one of the many forms of religious leadership, of social redemption, of human rebuilding, or one of the useful artisan callings. With such an equipment and spirit, youth confronts the world, the old world disappointed and disillusioned, the new world full of possibility and adventure. And youth is ready for the encounter, "the heir of all the ages, in the foremost files of time."

It is a youth that with all its questionings and uncertainties has at heart a measure of confidence in the worthfulness of life and the moral order of the universe. It does not hesitate to challenge much that has come to it from the past, and to deny many or even most of the dogmas it was taught in earlier years. But much of this air of audacity is due to a sense of freedom, and a determination to take nothing for granted, but to prove all things. There is a much more serious mood in the mind of youth than is often supposed, and the deep problems of morals and religion are receiving more sincere consideration from students and other young persons than casual contacts would reveal.

Youth Demands Truth

Youth is insistent upon reality. It confronts the world with the audacity which demands the full truth. The hesitencies and timidities which made the higher criticism and evolution so terrifying to an older generation have no place in its mental structure. The "social gospel" which was once believed to dissipate all the sanctions of individual evangelism, is now accepted as its complement and corollary. The emphasis once placed upon the magical elements in Christianity—prediction, miracle, inspiration, conversion—has ceased to have significance as the great facts of religion have come to clearer view. Doctrines, rituals, ordinances, organizations have taken a subordinate place in the regard of the youth of today, in the conviction rightly or wrongly that they are rather trivial things, and that only a trivial God could set much store by them. This attitude of mind has dealt freely and perhaps drastically with the superficials of Christianity, and has made room for the real fundamentals—not the items that too often go by that name—to have their rightful place.

Furthermore, intelligent and open-minded youth is challenging and discarding the superstitions which are survivals from a crude and illiterate past, and which appear to have so curious an influence with certain types of mind even today. If the public prints are to be trusted, and newspaper publicity is an index of popular thinking, there are still many people who put confidence in various forms of fortune-telling, in astrology, in numerology, in spiritism and in other pretended arts of divination and magic. Without discounting any worthful inquiry into psychic phenomena, it is depressing to estimate the amount of time and money that is squandered in vagaries of the sort. Of "flat earthers" and "holy rollers" there are enough and quite enough. Intelligent youth confronts such superstitions with frank disapproval.

Youth is confronting the problem of the relations of church and state with fresh interest and concern.

There was a time when the church was controlled by the state. In Europe during centuries it was a contest to determine which should have the supremacy. In the early New England days the churches were largely supported by the state, and received regularly their share of tithes and taxes. Happily that relationship long since ceased, and the churches insisted on assuming their own maintenance. But there has been an entail of the system in the form of tax exemptions, special privilege, clerical gratuities and other favors in virtue of which the churches and the clerical order, both men and women, have evaded the payment of large sums annually to the state and to other institutions, particularly the railroads, which in the nature of the case have to be supplied by other and legitimately contributing citizens. No protest against special privilege is more constant than this on the part of people who hold it as a perversion of rights. It cannot be questioned that if the churches and other religious organizations paid their just proportion of the taxes, the public burden would be notably lightened, and the moral advantage that would fall to the religious agencies would be an effective means of securing good will. It is hardly necessary to point to the action of certain churches in the United States and in Canada who have assumed voluntarily the obligation of taxes, and have thereby removed from their shoulders the charge of special privilege.

What Youth Demands of the Church

Youth is confronting the problem of Christianity and business with increasing disquiet. A very large percentage of the business life of the nation is in the membership of the churches. As viewed by masses of people outside of the churches the wealth of the nation is in the hands of so-called Christian men. The churches have regarded this situation with satisfaction. To have "business men" on its boards of trustees was regarded as a sign of economic security and wise financial management. When questions of equity between capital and labor were under discussion it has been too frequently assumed that the church was on the side of money. In fact, when the rights of labor have been pleaded in the name of religion, the reply has more than once been given by representatives of big business, "We own the churches and the ministers." The collapse of great business interests during the past two years has brought a shock of surprise and disillusionment to the church and the outside world. Many of the men whose downfall has wrought tragic ruin to individuals and institutions have been trusted members of the Christian society. It is evident that the church has not preached the doctrine of simple honesty and responsibility to its rich men as it should have done. And youth is taking note of that fact with the conviction that its part in the renovation of the economic order is clear and imperative. Men who violate all rules of business probity and speculate with the money of other people are not fit for membership in any self-respecting church. And the warnings which the church may well derive from these tragedies of the business world may save men of lesser station from the like lamentable fate.

Youth is confronting other serious phases of the social order today with like questioning and growing determination to take a hand in the making of a better world. The war spirit is abroad among the nations. The inequities of past treaties and treatments have left scars which are not healing. Men and women of the militaristic mind are doing their utmost to hurry mankind back to the battlefield. Immoral nationalisms and blatant imperialisms are threatening the peace of the continents. Nations, great and small, are babbling about their "security" and their "honor." Pseudo-politicians are preparing to waste the nations as some incompetent generals wasted soldiers in the world war. It is only youth that can save the world from a fresh disaster so terrible that all wars of the past would be forgotten in its horror. The resolution of student groups in Europe and America not to lend themselves to the insanity of war is encouraging and contagious.

Humanity is confronting a new world. And fortunately it is a fresh, young humanity that is rising. "Thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." That is the divine assurance to every generation, and to none in history so truly as to this. Some lessons are so severe that once learned, they should not be forgotten. Some problems humanity will meet again; with some it may well have done forever. Some enemies, once discovered, need not be encountered again.

There is a striking scene at the close of Dumas' story, "The Vicomte de Bragelone." D'Artagnan, the brave musketeer, is called to die. He takes leave of his comrades, including the traitor Aramis, with whom he had not quarreled. "Athos, Porthos, farewell till we meet again! Aramis, adieu forever!"

The Worship of an Extinct Fire

By Roger Eddy Treat

Keeping up the forms of religion, but resisting its influence. 2 *Timothy* 3:5.

IT IS THE experience of everyone who tries to preach, to come now and again upon a text which "sets all his bells going." The text need not be—often is not—unfamiliar. But now it appears in a light altogether new, its truth for the moment filling his whole world and he finds himself sharing the mood of the Apostle Paul: "Woe is me if I preach not!"

Such a text is the one I bring to you this morning, chanced upon in browsing through some shelves of religious books in the Detroit library. It was a book of sermons I opened, but I know nothing more of the sermon than the subject and its text. The subject was "The Worship of an Extinct Fire" and the text was these words of Paul to Timothy, recorded in the opening verses of the third chapter of the second letter: "In the last days there are going to be hard times. People will be selfish, avaricious, boastful, arrogant, abusive, undutiful, ungrateful . . . with no self-control, brutal,

with no love of what is good . . . caring more for pleasure than for God, keeping up the forms of religion but resisting its influence."

Our Institutionalized Religion

Oh, what a text to speak from in this hour! Not that I hold the last days to be at hand in any sense of the word, but in how many communities of the Christian world one finds people who have so lost heart that they are keeping up the forms of religion while resisting its influence! One of the many charges brought against the religion of Jesus is that it is completely institutionalized. I take it that this does not mean that our faith is over-organized, that there are too many denominations and creeds and churches and pastors and officers. That is not what these critics of Christianity mean by institutionalizing. They mean that it now runs of its own momentum and that the first flush and fire of its enthusiasm are gone. They mean that people are "keeping up the forms of religion"; they are, as we put it in commoner speech, going through the motions of religion without giving religion its chance at their hearts and lives.

Well, we must not forget, if we are to account for this fact, that our religion is very old, almost two thousand years old, and Christianity is but the re-expression of elements of religious faith which are as old as the human race itself. The race has had a long time, several hundred thousands of years in which to become used to religion, and it has had nearly two thousand years in which to become accustomed to the religion of Jesus. It is small wonder, then, that the very language of religion in general, and of Christianity in particular, should have become so familiar as to fall thoughtlessly from our lips. The words have been worn so smooth by constant use that they slip from the tongue without our being aware of them. We can say the same phrase so often that at last we come to speak it by rote. How liable to such a pass is the Lord's prayer! How empty of its deepest meaning can thus become the act of bowing the head in reverence or the taking of the bread and the cup at the communion service! "Keeping up the forms of religion but resisting its influence."

The Thrill of First Experiences

One of the pathetic facts of life is the ease with which its most thrilling experiences pall. While on vacation in New Hampshire last summer I was congratulating a fellow-townsman on the privilege that was daily his of lifting his eyes to Mount Monadnock. "Do you know," he replied, "I get tired of having my eyes pulled up by that mountain all the time." Familiarity breeds contempt. The edge of keenest zest soon blunts. It is not the twenty-fifth experience of the same view or of the same joy that we remember, nor even the second, it is always the first!

The first sight of ocean surf in a "northeaster." The first ride on a Pullman train. The first flight in an airplane. The first night away from home. The first day at college. And so on and on. These were all thrilling because they were new, and they were never to be forgotten. It requires but a second repetition for almost any experience to become an old story. The glamour fades; we are quickly satiated and we sigh for the recovery of the thrill of the first-time experience. Before we know it we are keeping up the forms, going through life mechanically without a thought as to the central meaning of the act, resisting its influence. It is only a short while before life itself becomes institutionalized for any of us.

Friendship With God

But there are some experiences of life which one wishes devoutly might always remain as fresh and overpowering in their reality as when we first met them. And religion is foremost among them. Do you recall what Job sighs for in the midst of his meditation upon the sadness and the drabness of his lot? "Oh, that I were as in the days of my youth, *when the friendship of God was upon my tent.*" You can interpret that to mean merely that he was sighing for luckier days, when he was young and strong and well. But you miss a deep truth if you do that. Job longed for the return of the days when the friendship of God was not only upon his tent but also in his heart! There is no ecstasy in all the gamut of human joys akin to the sense of the nearness of God.

I care not how little religious any of us holds himself to be, there has been at least one hour when such contentment of soul was his, that the reality of God's immediate presence was unquestioned. God at that moment was as real as one's own self. As sensibly deny the existence of the one as the other. That moment was the zenith of human joy, whatever form it took. But how quickly it passed! We may well have wished with Peter and John to build a tabernacle and dwell in the presence of that joy the rest of our days but, like them, we were led down the mountainside from the summit of transfiguration into the midst of the world's humdrum need and duty.

It may be that one must walk the rest of his days in the valley with only the memory of that brief moment on the summit to stay his heart and steady his feet. But the most colossal mistake we can make is to deny the reality of the experience, or of him who was its Creator, because it is so rare, and the possibility of its repetition at the very next moment if only, like Jesus, we are on the watch for it.

Losing the Capacity for Belief

As I go about among the church people of our day I find them shockingly downhearted. They are alarmingly in the same state of mind as were those early Hebrews who said: "God will not do good neither will he do evil." Professor Bundy of DePauw university says we are in all too great danger of succumbing to that "most terrible of human maladies, creeping paralysis of the religious consciousness." We may not lose merely our faith in God but even our capacity for belief in him. And that would be hell on earth!

If such a condition truly exists then the church has surely lost its way and in consequence the world is in great confusion. And, in the main, I think that is a fair charge to bring against the church of Jesus. There

is no general agreement as to the reason for its existence nor as to what its work in the world should be. Make inquiries touching these two points and you will receive many different and confusing answers.

The leaders and members of one great branch of the Christian church will tell you that the sole purpose and work of the church of Jesus is to bring people the world around to acknowledge the deity and lordship of Christ. They hold that when the people of earth acknowledge the godhead of Jesus the purpose and work of the church will have been fulfilled. But again there is an almost equally large branch of the Christian church whose members will tell you that the church exists not to enable men to worship Jesus as God on earth but to worship God as revealed by the life, the spirit and the words of Jesus. And this is a very different thing! And there is a third group of the organized followers of Jesus who find the reason for the existence of the church to rest in the demonstration and the perpetuation of the religion by which Jesus himself lived and wrought. They hold the primary work of the church to be the application of his rule of love to all the relationships of life in the name and spirit of the Nazarene.

What Does Church Membership Mean?

This whole matter never came home to me until I fell to discussing with people of the parish the meaning of church membership and the value of church attendance. Then the poverty of our attitude appeared at once. Why go to church? People unblushingly argued that a church in the community enhances property values and therefore the shrewd home-owner and real estate investor will back the church. Then there is the old argument that the church is a great force for morality, citing as evidence the traditional lawlessness and iniquity of the churchless community in the days of the frontier west. Another will urge church attendance for its social value: it is a good way to become acquainted with the desirable people of one's community. And I have heard people urge church attendance upon others, thinking to clinch their argument by saying that "at least, it will do you no harm."

There are other reasons given, equally bad and poverty stricken. All the way from those positively bad to those negatively good. Ask the average person and, if he is absolutely honest, he will tell you that he does not know why he goes to church or else that he goes because he was brought up to go. If this be the case then how truly we are going through the motions of religion after the fire of its spirit and influence has long since died. It reminds me of nothing so much as the traditional old-country Irish "wake" at which the coffin and corpse were stood up in the corner in grim and determined attempt to make the departed appear alive and still present.

Men Want Reality

I do not believe for a moment that we are guilty of downright pretension and hypocrisy. To be sure, there is glaring and alarming discrepancy between our Christian professions and our practice. Too many of us do as the apostle suggests: behold our face in the mirror and realize we should do a little cleaning up and then go our way and forget absolutely what we saw. We do that with many of our resolutions formed in church. But that is a problem of very minor proportions when compared with the current confusion, uncertainty and indifference as to what religion and the church are all about. Everywhere are people who have come to regard the church as a negligible factor in life.

All this makes evident what we need. We want above everything else reality and vitality in our religion. We want to have a religion which makes a difference in our

Roger Eddy Treat

daily life. We want a religion which is a power in our own hearts and lives. We want a religion that will do things to us! Theologians have said this is all a matter of belief and have in turn offered us either liberal or conservative theology. Modernists and fundamentalists have filled the air with the din of their tirades and invectives. But their strife is subsiding and we are learning that it is not by way of theological opinion and belief that our peace is to be found.

The church is not here either to convince the world that Jesus is "very man of very man" or "very God of very God." I am not now sure that it matters one whit what one's theology is. I have met fundamentalists who were certain beyond all question that Jesus was God on earth, who were utterly Christless and Godless in their treatment of fellow Christians who could not believe as they believed. On the other hand, I have talked and walked with men who could not exalt and magnify Jesus above the merest human levels, who were redolent of his spirit, and their Christ-

likeness was their chief characteristic. No, theology is not the way out.

The "Lost Radiance" of Religion

A few years ago there appeared a book which had wide reading—"The Lost Radiance of the Christian Religion," by Principal Jacks. A suggestive title and book. A glamour, a luster, a warmth, glow and colorfulness, a radiance, something alluring and compelling which were possessed by Jesus and the apostles, have disappeared from our religion. We speak longingly, wistfully of the apostolic zeal which carried the Founder of our religion and his followers to the cross, the lions and the flames. Time, as we have seen, is in part responsible for the cooling of that early zeal, but time is not the only factor.

Part of the blame, surely, must be laid upon human nature and its everlasting willingness to sidestep the difficult, the dangerous, the exacting, and its eager readiness to have another act in its stead. And here the theologians more than all others have been responsible. Let us once become convinced that in some mysterious fashion which even theology cannot perfectly set forth, Jesus did everything necessary for our perfection by a brief but glorious life, culminating in its tragic but sacrificial death, then, as the old hymn said, "the great transaction was complete." In all the future centuries the Christian religion would only consist of worshiping the Savior of us all, thanking and praising him for doing for us what each of us knows he could never have accomplished for himself. Christianity becomes according to this doctrine a proxy-religion; Christ becomes our vicar and does everything in our stead.

Essential Christianity

I mean by Christianity the religion by which Jesus himself lived from day to day and faced the cross and its bitter death. This was not a religion in which he, Jesus, was to become the center of all his adherents' worship. I can find at no point that Jesus either inculcated or sanctioned worship of himself. I do find specific instances where he frustrated such attempts. His religion was a way of living with God and men. He manifested an attitude toward life and revealed a mode of treatment of one's fellowmen in which good will was the regnant factor.

This same attitude and mode of treatment he revealed and practiced till his life was sealed in death. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me." He was content to let the contagion of a lofty example do its perfect work. He never undertook to be Christian for us. He never will. "Follow me." But we must do the following. No one can ever *make* us Christian. There is no painless, effortless process by which we can become Christlike. Only "he who doeth the will of the Father shall know of the doctrine." "Be ye doers of the word and not hearers only." If we are to take Christ's way of living seriously *we* must do it, or as far as we are concerned it is a lost issue.

What is ever to arouse us to these facts? Who or what is to make us *see* the folly and futility of this vicarious Christianity, this proxy Christianity, this delegated, second-hand Christianity, in which through worship of Jesus all responsibility is placed upon him and we go scot free? This has largely brought us to the present pass. We are "keeping up the forms of religion, but resisting its influence."

Our religion has still its ancient power. It enabled the first Christians to turn the world upside down. It could do it again if we were brave enough to quit resisting its influence. But we must have great expectations. What if this week, tomorrow, this afternoon, this very hour, we resolved to forget the forms and permit the religion of Jesus to dominate ourselves and our whole life and world? From this company gathered here this morning would radiate influences which would rock the world.

The Religion of Jesus No Opiate!

By Alfred W. Wishart

WE discuss this morning the challenge of Karl Marx adopted by the Communists of Russia and approved by many intellectuals in other countries, that religion is the opium of the people. As a background of what I shall say I wish to read two quotations. One of them is from an interesting book by Charles E. Osborne, an English clergyman, on "Religion in Europe and the World Crisis," published in 1916. Speaking of the problem of religion in Russia, which has two phases, one man's soul reaching out toward God and the other, man's craving for fellowship and union with his fellows, he says:

> The Russian spirit is here of immense importance, for the people of Russia is at once, in H. G. Wells's words, "organically religious," and also religion with them invariably seeks a social form. Even their extremest anti-religious movements or anti-church movements are often, in the case of those who are genuine enthusiasts, and not merely flippant echoes of enthusiasm, marked by a deeply religious spirit, by exaltation, vision, self-sacrifice—in a word, by the cross. Many in Russia of the party of revolution, whether in thought or in politics, have displayed qualities which remind us strikingly of the ardour, the loyalty to a hunted cause, the grand abandon of the martyrs of primitive Christianity.
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> As in the case of the first Christians, Russian women and girls have been prominent among those, in the nihilist movements, for instance, who have thrown away their lives and counted them as nothing in the balance as against devotion to an ideal. We may admit to the full the wild extravagance of the theories of many of these political martyrs in the past, their inexperience in regard to the practical side of social reconstruction, their want of historical perspective, the haste and shallowness of their views and theories, copied and exaggerated in most cases from the paper schemes and utopias in the air of the least solid and the worst disciplined of western revolutionary thinkers or from the more philistine type of scientific materialism—the popularized physical science

of the day before yesterday, in which evolution and atheism spelt practically one and the same thing.

Let not all this, however, which to our more sober, balanced English intelligence, appears so childish and so hysterical, lead us to ignore the real wrongs against which these people have cried out, the harsh repression which has been, until recently, the sole answer to their criticism and complaints, and which has filled with venom and passion their propaganda of revolt.

Later on, referring to the correspondence between Catherine the Great and Voltaire, which for the while seemed to indicate Russia's departure from religion, he says: "Of all the devils that could threaten to possess that country the least likely to do so is Mephistopheles, the cynic. No mere mocking scorn can be a true expression of a soul so mystical, so sacrificial and so naturally and instinctively Christian as the soul of all that is best and deepest in the Russia of today." Within a year after these words were written the Russian church fell. Atheism was enthroned.

A Picture from Real Life

The other quotation is from an address recently given by Professor Edgar W. Brightman, of the graduate school of Boston university. He quotes a letter which appeared in a Boston newspaper in answer to those who were counseling faith to those who were in distress.

Perhaps you can tell us countless thousands of jobless fathers and us wives of jobless men and mothers of children of jobless fathers how to keep down the defeating despair that wells up in the bravest hearts, killing courage, choking ambition and destroying belief in the goodness of God, our country and ourselves.

Did you ever face two hungry children and with a lying smile tell them, "Daddy's gone to the store for bread," while daddy tried to pawn his last treasure in the hope of buying bread?

Did you ever see the pieces of love and sacrifice of ten years, every stick of your household goods go under the hammer and be dragged out of your home before your eyes?

Did you ever make your mother's old portieres into warm little coats for cold little bodies?

Did you ever see all the shining hopes for a happy, sheltered home come tumbling about you in ruins, crushing the heart out of your mate and the laughter from your babies' eyes?

You couldn't have and still say such experience creates faith. I say it breaks faith, mocks faith, jeers at our faith in such a word as faith.

Or, are such as I foolish animals in a zoo—raving and tearing at the bars which hold us back? Is our fury at frustration the "last kick before we die," or is it the first yelp at a pain we can learn to endure in silence when we find yelping doesn't relieve?

Professor Brightman adds this comment: "No answer could be fully adequate, but surely most of what will be said and thought by believers in God on reading this heart-cry will be on a lower level of sincerity and spiritual depth than the document on which they are commenting."

We see before us everywhere entrenched wrongs, misrule, ruthless competition, crime, war, death, poverty; and the answer of many is a religion that knows no social program, that spends its effort in propagation of doctrines, its only urge the urge to more strict conformity to ritualistic observance, to more submission of the soul to ecclesiastical authority or to more belief in dogmas. Is, then, religion the opium that puts people to sleep, makes them content with things as they are, robs them of courageous opposition to social iniquity, silences their hostility to wrong? Is religion only a message of hope for mankind that after death their wrongs will be righted and they will enter the heaven of peace and happiness?

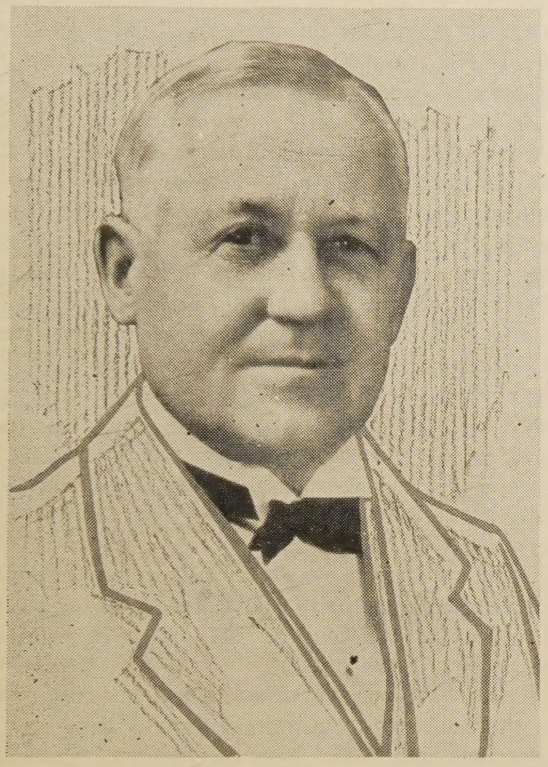
Religions Differ

Now, this challenge, this criticism of religion, is an illustration of the vice of generalization. It fails to distinguish between religions. It even ignores the significance of all religions, even the most primitive, and lacks historic perspective and a true evaluation of the origins of religion. Viewed broadly, religion is an outgrowth of man's spiritual necessities, represents man's hunger for the truth about the world in which he lives and about himself. The formulation of his ideas becomes the basis of his devotion and his worship but as time goes on and religion becomes organized, institutionalized, it may be, and it often is employed to put people to sleep. It is simply not true that all religion gives men hope and courage. It is simply not true that all religion aims to make the pathway of life easier and simpler for humanity's weary feet. Even the best of religions have their lapses and in spots fail to meet the needs of mankind. Today in Protestantism there are large areas where there is no note taken of the obligations of organized religion to put down social wrong and to promote social progress. The emphasis is laid upon the waiting attitude, the expectancy of the second coming of Jesus when miraculously the old order of things will come to an end and a new order of things established, also miraculously.

Is the slogan, "Religion, the opium of the people," applicable to Christianity? At times, yes. Always? No. Christianity is a very complex thing. It is a great historic movement that has taken hold upon the ends of the earth, that has become the dominating religion in many countries including millions and millions of followers. It is a vast complex of faith and hope and courage and idealism mixed with ecclesiasticism and speculative dogma and cold, dead formulas and assumptions of divine authority without basis in fact. It is at once an unseen spiritual force and a great, powerful organization. Its roots are in Jesus Christ, his life and his teaching.

Is "Religion, the opium of the people," applicable to Jesus, to his life and to his teaching? That, for Christian people is the supreme question. I affirm that it does not apply. I affirm that, on the basis of a strict, historical interpretation of the life and the teaching of Jesus. True, he was not a political or economic revolutionist. It would have been a tragedy, a calamity had he attempted to help the people by a revolution. All revolutions are not helpful. Many bring on a worse state than the state which the revolution intended to

improve. Jesus taught that which if lived out in human life will express itself not only in improved character, but in the reorganization of social and political life. He went to the roots of all good living. He disclosed the spring of all noble endeavor. That root of good living is love, love which is the foe of greed, selfishness, oppression, pride, envy, covetousness. If love could conquer and rule the lives of men, numerous obstacles in the pathway of men would disappear. If love could control the lives of the followers of Jesus, a vastly different Christianity would exist in this world today than that which actually does exist. He taught that love is no sickly



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sentimentalism, spending its force in emotional experiences. Love to him was a great dynamic power that enabled those who possessed it to serve the world, to make sacrifices of resource and time and strength, to make a better world. He taught the value of a practical religion which showed its love of God by a courageous opposition to all the evils that weigh humanity down, a practical religion that was interested in seeing that people had enough to eat and clothes to wear, a practical religion that was interested in banishing disease, ignorance and poverty from the world.

It is a real tragedy today that so many earnest, enthusiastic and sincere believers in Jesus Christ should be spending their force and leading multitudes to spend their force in psalm singing and emotional services, depriving the world which needs the active support of Christian people, in humanitarian undertakings, of the services of these multitudes of Christians, whose eyes are fixed, not on an improved world where there will be less economic injustice and more real political freedom but whose eyes are fixed upon the skies, looking for the coming of their Lord. What a terrible travesty on the religion of Jesus! What a heart-breaking departure from his spirit of service and love, expressed in sacrifice and faith, manifested in active endeavor to improve the lot of men!

Jesus Was an Awakener!

Religion did not put Jesus to sleep. There are those who dwell upon his doctrines of forgiveness and gentleness and meekness and who have argued that the ascetic, the coward who runs away from the world to save his soul is a typical follower of Jesus and true believer in Jesus, but they are wrong. The gentleness and meekness of Jesus were associated with the highest form of courage and with the most strenuous activity for the good of mankind. No man has excelled him in brave opposition to the blind leaders of the blind. No man ever surpassed him in his determination to loosen the grip of false religion upon the mind and heart of man. He was no coward. He was no ascetic running away from the problems of human life. He taught the value of the human person. He gave the whole world, for all time, a standard by which to test the value of institutions and that was their effect upon men, women and children. Their successful operation is not to be determined by the profits made by these organizations and institutions. Their successful operation is to be determined by the kind of men and women and children they make, by their influence upon human life. How greatly is a standard needed in these trying days when so many have lost their way and are seeking tests of value! It is found in the words of Jesus: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose himself?" "What shall a man give in exchange for his self?" He taught with great explicitness the responsibility that rests upon men of power and men of wealth. He dwelt much upon the use of riches, upon the perils of riches, pointing out how easily they strangle the soul, how easily they narrow the sympathies and make men proud, selfish and heedless of those who are unfortunate.

No great religious teacher ever so clearly emphasized the responsibility of leaders for the right use of their power. He championed the cause of the poor, the despised, the outcast. He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance, not to minister to healthy, respectable, happy, comfortable people but to minister to those who were despised and sick in mind and body, to the oppressed and discouraged. "More joy is there in heaven," he said, "over the return of one sinner than over the ninety and nine that need no repentance." Great was his love of the dispossessed, of the unchurched, the blind masses, so often deceived and misled by those entrusted with power and responsibility, blind leaders of the blind. How many of them there are today!

A Christian Nation That Muddled

I read the other evening a very interesting article by Signor Nitti, formerly premier of Italy, now an exile from that fascist country, in which he points out the fact that the radical thinkers, the enemies of capitalism, have always encouraged war. Wherever there was trouble that might lead to war, they were sure to

push it along because they know that history teaches plainly the fact that wars lead to revolutions and their hope lay in revolutions. With the great world war back of him, which he says cost the world two hundred billions of dollars and ten million lives, he raises the question: If the capitalist system is in such peril from revolutions brought on by war, why do not the capitalists organize against war? He says they are dominated by an old mentality, by old delusions, namely, that armies and navies are guarantees of security and that the real power of a nation is expressed in war. Isn't that true and is it not a striking and marvelously strange fact that this upper class, so far as intelligence is concerned, made up of the great industrial and financial leaders, cannot see the handwriting on the wall and do so little to bring about international cooperation and peace? It is a crying disgrace to the United States the way we muddle with our entrance into the World Court, a little step toward peace and international cooperation. Some day, perhaps, although it is doubtful, those whose economic interests would be the first to suffer, may awake to the peril that confronts capitalism today. They may awake to the fact that physical repression, armies and navies, the use of police force, clubs and jails, are not sufficient answers to the indictments leveled against political and economic tyranny.

Are Christian Nations Christian?

That is a very serious aspect of this whole situation. The Christian nations, the United States, Great Britain, France, claim to be organizing for peace and striving for disarmament, while their governments tolerate the manufacture of millions of dollars worth of armaments to ship to foreign countries. How much faith do you think those in other lands put in our talk about peace and disarmament when they know that in all these countries vast fortunes are being made today by the manufacture and shipment of armaments?

Now, Jesus did not deal with these issues. They were not living issues of his time. But in principle he did deal with them because he was a Messiah for peace, because he did believe in the reign of love and good will among men, because he was sure that the only ultimate solution of these problems is in the transformation of human character and the creation of social conditions which will facilitate the reformation and regeneration of the lives of men.

The conditions in Russia alluded to in the quotation I read, the conditions in this country referred to by the jobless father, are not conducive to faith in God or country. This jobless father was right. Such experiences break a man's heart and break his faith. It is easy for those who do not suffer to preach faith and hope but the evils complained of in Russia were real evils and they constituted a condition in Russia in which true religion could not flourish. The conditions that confront us in our own great beloved land are not conditions that are character-building. They are not conditions that encourage the distressed and the poor to believe in God or in country.

A God Who Takes Sides

Jesus believed in a God who takes sides. To take sides means to distinguish between those types of religions that minister to human welfare and those types that enslave human minds and spread superstition. There are a lot of very foolish things being said on the radio, in pulpits, in magazines and books, about toleration. True toleration is not tolerant toward wrong. It is critical. It is aggressive. It is not silence in the presence of entrenched evil or religious handicaps, obstacles in the pathway of men. Was Jesus tolerant toward the Scribes and the Pharisees and to the formalism of the Jewish faith? Did he say, "O, well, we are all bound for the same place and we all mean well"? No. So far as this world is concerned, we are not all bound for the same place. The kind of a world that some religions would create is not the kind of world that Jesus would create. A God who takes sides, knows the difference between the sheep and the goats, between Dives and Lazarus, between the oppressor and the oppressed. I believe in a God who takes sides and we must believe in a God who takes sides if we believe in Jesus. It does not follow that we must hate those whom we oppose, that we should not appreciate the good in the forms and types of religion which we criticize, but it does mean that we should be loyal and faithful to the standards of the Christ in whom we profess faith, that we should understand him and preach his gospel sincerely and fearlessly, let the chips fall where they may. There is no other way.

Those who supported, defended, apologized for the ecclesiasticism and traditionalism of the Russian church, were not friends of the church or friends of Jesus. They were digging the grave of Christianity in Russia. So, away with all that sickly sentimentalism that slobbers over everything and loses sight of distinctions and values, loses the power of discrimination, and for the sake of popularity refuses to risk anything in defense of the highest values and the highest truths.

Vain Traditions

Why is it, it may be asked, that the followers of Jesus so widely and so often fail to embody and to express the religion of the Jesus in whom they believe? Here we are face to face with a very interesting question and it is not so difficult to answer. Its answer argues for charity as well as understanding. The answer is that there are other forces at work in this world besides intelligence and faith in the best and the highest. There are, for example, traditions handed on from generation to generation, taught from family to family so that children are brought up to believe in dogmas and to practice rites that are venerable with age around which evil clusters. There are a great many beliefs hoary with the years, much beloved, that are of no value to mankind or that are a hindrance to mankind. But who can deny the power of tradition, of environment, of early education? It is too much to expect that the Hindu, for example, will rise out

of his environment easily, free himself from the power of tradition and become a shining example of devotion to the highest and the best. Some have done that because they have been brought face to face with the Christ and have seen the light. The great masses are bound hand and foot by the traditions of the past. That applies also to Christianity. There is much that is traditional, burdensome in Christianity, baggage that we would be better off without. We would move more freely and more powerfully if we were without these hindrances handed down from generation to generation.

Science, Economics, Have Their Place

Then, there is this very serious phase of the whole issue. It is not easy to know what to do even though our intentions are of the highest type, even though we are tremendously sincere, even though we are willing to sacrifice and to suffer, to achieve the good. It is not easy to know what to do. That is very important and it suggests this fact, that religion must seek the end of engineering ability, scientific skill, accurate surveys of facts, accurate diagnoses of political and economic diseases. We cannot recreate society easily. We cannot adopt every program suggested by every radical revolutionist. We cannot assume off-hand that Jesus would have our social life organized in this way or in that way. It is a problem to find out what to do after we have surrendered to Christ and are willing to act, act with courage, with fidelity to Jesus, willing to make sacrifices and carry the cross. To the question of what to do Christian men should address themselves with earnestness and passion to discover the way in which the religion of Jesus can be expressed in social and political and economic terms.

May I add this? I hope you will remember it. It is a judgment upon the present condition of the Christian religion. We are in the closing days of that type of Christianity, those forms of Christianity, that concentrate attention upon the salvation of individuals from a future hell. We are in the closing days of a Christianity that is too much absorbed in that sort of individual salvation. Never has Christianity wholly ignored the need of a Christian social order but it has often failed to emphasize the social application of the teaching of Jesus. It is doing so more and more.

The Church's Social Achievements

The slogan, "Religion, the opium of the people," will be less and less true of Christianity. The Catholic church is dealing in its own way and vigorously with the social conditions of our times and through declarations of the head of the church, it is calling the attention of the world to the iniquities of our economic life and to the need of the Christianization of human society. Numerous Protestant bodies are devoting themselves with enthusiasm and courage to the criticism of existing institutions and practices and to the setting up of higher standards and ideals for Christian people. They are organizing more and more against war and fighting for peace and good will around the world.

I have not time to show how untrue the slogan, "Religion, the opium of the people," is to many achievements of the church and to many Christian men and women in every century of Christian history. The Christian church as a whole is not given credit by many critics for its assault upon slavery, its exaltation of womanhood, its deliverance of woman from much of the bondage of the past, its plea for the value of the child, its contribution to the care of the sick, the establishment of hospitals, the promotion of preventive medicine, its contribution to the cause of education, its beliefs in the right of the common man to the best there is in education. This slogan overlooks the leadership of men and women through all the Christian centuries who were not asleep, but who were the active opponents of wrong, the challengers of despotism, the defenders of human rights, the ardent advocates of justice. There have been missionaries of the cross, heroes of faith, who have translated the teaching of Jesus into terms of devotion to the common man, the defense of his rights and his values.

I close with this thought: the Christianity which ceases to be aggressive, which shrinks from challenging the way men do things and what they think, which refuses to be hostile to entrenched wrong, is doomed; but the religion of Jesus is not dead. It lies at the heart of things today. It is the great inspiration of the best and truest in our modern life. It will inspire an increasing number of men and women who will bear the cross and suffer shame for the sake of a new and a better world.

Oh, men and women, do remember that the call of Jesus is not to a life of security and ease and comfort. It is not a call to enter a haven of rest so you won't need to bother any more about the present or the future, a soul saved from every social obligation. Oh, no, the call of Jesus is a clarion cry to the courageous and to the best in man, to put on the whole armor of God and go forth to fight for the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness, that God's will may be done on the earth as it is in heaven.

In Defense of Youth

WE call them wrong! God pity us, the blind,
Imputing evil as our grandsires did,
When we explored new realms with feet and mind,
Uncovering what old fogies damned and hid!
The dreams, the wanton fantasies are there,
As you and I once knew them, loved them, till
We came to staleness and to foolish fear
Lest something change, be different, jolt our will!

'Tis life they seek, not sin, no sordid thing,
But joy in health and beauty, and in all
The urge of thrilling bodies that would sing
And freely dance with laughter at earth's call.
Let's laugh with them, full knowing that when tried
By Truth and Duty, Youth is on God's side!

ROBBINS WOLCOTT BARSTOW.

The Oil and the Flame

BY M. H. LICHLITER

They made me a keeper of the vineyards;
But mine own vineyard have I not kept. The Song of Songs 1:6.

IT IS impossible to overlook the wistfulness and pathos in that confession. A Shulammite girl is speaking. She had been seized by the courtiers of King Solomon, torn from her day's work and from the side of her shepherd lover and brought to the king's palace. The ladies of the court are trying to tell her how fortunate she is, what a wonderful thing it meant to be loved by a king. She is not impressed. She contrasts her peasant dress with the elaborate robes of the court favorites. She contrasts their complexions with her own face touched "by the shadowed livery of the burnished sun." Listen to her words:

I am black but comely,
O ye daughters of Jerusalem.
As the tents of Kedar,
As the curtains of Solomon.
Look not upon me, because I am swarthy,
Because the sun hath scorched me.
They made me a keeper of the vineyards,
But mine own vineyard have I not kept.

That raises the whole question of our responsibility to ourselves. What does one owe to oneself? Is the end of life the surrender of personality, or self-expression, or self-realization? How far is one justified in neglecting the culture of one's own personality? Is there any justification for such a complete self-giving, such a wholehearted absorption in one's task, that one overlooks the enrichment of one's own life?

There is an old story we cannot soon forget. It is the story of the keeper of a lighthouse on a dangerous coast. Winter was closing in and the supply boat had not come. The few inhabitants of the little village were facing death in the cold, bleak north. Because they were his neighbors, and because he loved humanity, the keeper of the lighthouse gave away his reserves of oil. One night the beacon went out, and the supply ship was driven on the rocks.

It is just a fable, as Maeterlinck says, but he uses it to suggest a most wholesome philosophy of the personal life. "See that you give not away the oil of your lamp, though your lamp be never so small. Let your gift be the flame."

The Waste of the Oil

Consider the tragic waste of the oil. Consider the folly of keeping the vineyards and neglecting the vineyard of one's own life. Obviously, there is such a thing as a noble waste of personality. Ernst Renan had in him a streak of cynicism but he was appreciative enough when he paid his tribute to the absolute unselfishness of religious devotion. Speaking of men whose passionate interest had been awakened by faith, Renan says: "To preach to a man not to devote himself is like preaching to a bird not to make its nest and not to nourish its young." One could multiply illustrations of noble self-sacrifice; the artist starving himself in an attic that he might give a masterpiece to the world; the athlete rigorously denying himself that he might wear the laurel; the saint, counting not his own life dear unto himself, that he might bring to others the gladness and joy which he had himself found in Christ. History is crowded with stories like these.

Religion has had innumerable men and women who have given the oil as well as the flame. Basil, Gregory of Nazianzen, Chrysostom, Athanasius, Ambrose, Augustine, Tertullian, Cyprian, Jerome and a thousand more. These men were products of an age when asceticism was the only answer faith could give to indulgence. Every student of history knows that asceticism was carried too far. There was always the peril of so using up the oil that there was no flame. It is monasticism as a social institution rather than the record of individual ascetics which has left its impress upon history. That is to say, it was the care of the poor, the development of a social conscience against extravagant and purposeless living, and the conservation of elements of idealism which we charge up to the everlasting credit of that age, rather than the dramatic renunciation of a few men. As a matter of fact, most of these men would have been worth vastly more to the kingdom of God if they had lived more sensibly and had given, not the oil but the flame. We have a contemporary example in Gandhi. Undoubtedly his sincere but dramatic self-denial touches the mystically sensitive east, but most of us in the west would say that it would be better for India if Gandhi were to live for it and not die for it. India needs a guide, not a martyr.

Tragic Waste of Personality

There is little need to preach against asceticism in its older forms today. There is serious need to utter a warning against the tragic waste of human talent and influential personalities. Too many men burn the candle at both ends, use up too much vital force, cut their lives short, and rob the world of those maturer years which might strengthen purpose and enrich thought. Think of brilliant ministers dead before fifty. Think of able business and professional men who have dropped out in the forties or early fifties, because they did not take the time to pay some attention to themselves. "They made me a keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." It has been a noble waste of personality, it is true, but it has been a tragic waste just the same. It is the easiest thing to preach about the conservation of one's energies and the hardest thing in the world to practice.

On the other hand, we must not be blind to the ignoble waste of personality, the drainage of energy through trivial self-indulgence. There may be some ethical justification for giving one's life for others: there is certainly no ethical justification for flinging

it away. Dr. Walter B. Pitkin in a recent analysis of human stupidity tells us, for example, that the proved consumption of opium which does not rise above three or four grains per capita in most countries had, in 1919, risen to thirty-six grains in the United States. While not more than two hundred thousand persons are what might be called drug addicts, it is estimated that between three and four millions of our people use enough "dope" to lower the level of sensitivity. In the light of the recent hysterical cry for beer it is interesting to be reminded that one quart of beer will do what one-half of a grain of opium will do—it will keep one stupid for one hour,

M. H. Lichliter

and when the per capita beer consumption is somewhere near twenty-seven gallons per year, it is easy to explain the waste of vital energy. If the consumption of over one hundred billion cigarettes per year is taken into consideration and the effect of our increasing use of tobacco is to relax attention and diminish muscular capacity, we have still another illustration of the waste of rich human possibilities. "Maybe six cigarettes one after another," says Dr. Pitkin, "will result in a gentle stupidity, say just enough to cause a man to be outwitted in a delicately calculated business deal, or just enough to make a young lady seem dull and uninteresting, hence undesirable." Add to all this, the toll of preventable and curable disease and it is apparent that a multitude of otherwise sensible men and women are literally flinging away the rich resources of personality.

The answer, perhaps, is not prohibition. The answer is a rebirth of self-respect! "Why spend ye your money for what which is not bread, and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" When the world needs the flame, why give away the oil?

There is such a thing as the higher selfishness. I use the phrase so that it may compel us to reckon with this waste of human personality through indulgence and unnecessary disease. We are told by one of the leading authorities in ethics that "a man is morally bound to make his personality all that it is capable of becoming." There is no moral justification for any habit, any indulgence, any wasteful expenditures of energy, whether noble or ignoble, which rob contemporary life of the best service one may render.

Days of Judgment

A minister faces his own day of judgment when he has to confess, as most of us have been compelled to confess, that a sermon on a given Sunday morning was not all that it should have been because the morning study hours were frittered away in trivial details. An unusual genius for administration is no substitute for the prophetic quality of the message. A minister faces his own day of judgment when he is himself too tired, or too nervous, to be a channel of power and poise to someone who comes seeking his help in an emergency. There is no flame because there is no oil.

A physician faces his day of judgment if he permits himself to be so caught in the pressure of the day's work that he cannot, in an emergency, give his best to some one in dire need. A careless, off-hand diagnosis is tragically easy if one is not quite one's self, and in every city there are stories of surgeons who failed some one in an emergency operation because some wild party or a neglect of their own rest unfitted them for the gravity of the task.

A teacher faces his day of judgment if he is not consciously master of the situation; if he permits himself to use over and over again the lecture notes of previous years and fails to refresh his own mind and vitalize his technique by research.

A business man or lawyer will face a day of judgment if any sort of thoughtlessness or indulgence breaks down reserves of vital energy so that the mind becomes incapable of quick, sound decisions.

A student faces the day of judgment, if he tries to stimulate his mental processes by proper methods of application and study and, at the same time, breaks down the power of sensitive response by any sort of indulgence. It is an impossible intellectual "tug-of-war" to achieve concentration in study and, at the same time, listen to the singing radio.

A woman faces the day of judgment if she permits herself to be enslaved either by the narrow things of home, or by the routine of social pleasures, or by some nobler absorption in public service, if she finds herself with no physical or spiritual resilience which might offer some escape to a man who comes home disheartened and weary, or some encouragement to children who flock in with their little heartaches and disillusionments.

Do I make it clear that we are all living in glass houses and that no one is in any real position to preach to any one else, unless, first of all, he confesses his

own lack of immunity. Against this background of obvious peril which is resulting in business and professional inefficiency and domestic unhappiness, there is something to be said for one's duty to oneself.

I like what Dr. Dorner has said in his "System of Christian Ethics": "What we should aim at is not to make ourselves capable of great momentary achievements, but rather to cultivate endurance within the limits of our individual strength." To apply the figure, it is just plain, everyday, commonsense to conserve the oil so that the flame will not go out. Motive is, of course, the determining factor. When we talk about the higher selfishness, we skate on thin ice. There are plenty of men and women who take excellent care of themselves, but they are not keeping their vineyards, they never give the flame let alone the oil! *We are to take care of ourselves that we may give ourselves.* That is the Christian motive. Does it explain the withdrawals of Jesus from the multitude? Does it interpret his lonely vigils in the mountain of prayer? We are never to give ourselves to the point where what we give isn't worth what it should be.

The Ministry of the Flame

"See that you give not away the oil of the lamp, though your lamp be small. Let your gift be the flame." The flame is all that we ought to give. It is all that we ought to take. The principle of reverence for personality makes it a sin if we use another's personality for our own ends. We have no right to drain another's reserves of inspiration, of love, of sympathy, of power. We have no right to expect, or to ask for, or to take—the oil. Is that clear? And we have no right, if we respect our own personalities, to give away the oil, to strip ourselves of our own inner resources, to drain the reservoirs of our own latent inspirations.

Let your gift be the flame. Is there anything in you which gives light or direction or warmth? Give it freely. "Ye are the light of the world," said Jesus. "A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but on the stand; and it shineth unto all that are in the house. Even so, let your light shine before men; that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." That is so clear that a child can understand just what Jesus meant. Though my lamp be small, I am to give the flame.

If I cannot give $100 but can give 10 cents a week, I rob the kingdom of my flame if I withhold the smaller gift. If I cannot teach in a church school or lead a discussion group, but can make friendly visits among the needy, and pleasant social calls in the parish, or help to make attractive the social gatherings of the church, I rob myself of joy and others of my influence, if I do not volunteer to do what is within my power. If I can not lead in public prayer, but can sit down with some baffled man or woman to point the way out of a business muddle or a social blunder, I fail myself, I fail others, and I fail God, if I do not give the flame. If I have little fitness for what is called "church work" but can do something in the community to help others, I must remember that the flame burns just as brightly and with just as much warmth outside the pale of organized religion —and I must give the flame.

To be alive in such an age.
To live in it.
To give in it.
Rise, soul, from thy despairing knees,
What if thy lips have drunk the lees?
The passion of a larger claim
Will put thy puny grief to shame.
Fling forth thy sorrow to the wind,
Breathe the world-thought, do the world-deed,
Think highly of thy brother's need.
Give thanks with all thy flaming heart,
Crave but to have in it a part,
Give thanks, and clasp thy heritage—
To be alive in such an age!

The Tests of Life

By Charles F. Banning

For whosoever would save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's shall save it. For what doth it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and forfeit his life? For what should a man give in exchange for his life? Mark 8:35-37.

THE sermon this morning is particularly addressed to young people. It is commencement time and thousands of young people are going out to conquer the world. Many young people are facing the question of choosing their life work. I want to discuss this morning the tests which all of you must pass before you can arrive at your goal. We think when we have finished school that we shall have no more tests, but life's tests come daily. Our final examinations spread over many years. I do not think I will be accused of cheating this morning if I tell you what some of the examination questions will be. My hope is that I may help you to pass life's tests by telling you what is coming. Paul was writing to the church at Corinth. He said, "There is a door open to me, but there are many adversaries." This is the picture before young people this morning, the door of opportunity and the adversaries that stand in the way. These adversaries I shall discuss this morning as life's tests.

I. The Test of Exposure

I have a friend who has a number of greenhouses. He raises thousands of cabbage and tomato plants each year. A plant will never bear fruit if it is kept in the greenhouse, because the conditions are artificial. They must be transplanted before they can grow sufficiently to bear fruit. Each box is supposed to contain one hundred plants; each box actually contains from one hundred five to one hundred ten. They expect from five to ten per cent of the plants to die of exposure when they are first set out.

It is not use that destroys houses, bridges and buildings, but light, heat, cold, rain and rust, or in other words, exposure. Simon Peter was safe so long as he was in the upper room with Jesus. He could boast that even should all the other disciples forsake Jesus he would be loyal. Out in the courtyard he was not sheltered; he was exposed to criticism, and the test of exposure was too much for him. He went down in defeat and denied his Lord. Those of us who were in the army saw this test applied many times. In their homes young men were surrounded by public opinion and home care. In this atmosphere their morals were above reproach. They were transplanted from this hothouse atmosphere into the army where they were exposed to new conditions and temptations. Public opinion no longer guided their conduct. No one knew what they were doing when they were on their weekend leave and, so far as the army was concerned, no one cared. Thousands of young men went to pieces morally because they could not stand the test of exposure.

At this time of the year many young people are being transplanted from the hothouse of school life to the garden of actual real living. So long as they are in school, they are supported by their parents and surrounded by the atmosphere of home life. Now comes a day when they are thrust out into the world of competition. They must live among strangers, pay their own bills and make their own way. Excuses no longer suffice and mother can no longer make up for their neglect. The first, and one of the most severe, tests of life is the test of exposure.

II. The Test of Endurance

I was in a toy shop recently and saw many toys that were beautiful but, in the hands of a normal boy, they will not last a day. So much of life is that way. Many people on first appearance impress us as being very much worth while but they do not stand the test of endurance. Many young people start out in life gloriously but after a year or two they lose the fine ideals and settle into a selfish routine of life. They do not stand the test of endurance. So many things for which we spend our time, money and energy perish with the using.

Some years ago I helped to remodel an old house which was over one hundred years old. When we examined the sills we found that they were as solid as the day on which they were laid. They had stood the test of endurance. Following the test of exposure there will come to you young people the test of endurance. The monotony of your daily work will be oppressive to you. As housekeepers you will get tired of washing dishes and sweeping floors day after day. You who are in business will get tired of getting up early in the morning, catching the same train, going to the same office, sitting at the same desk and doing the same work day after day and year after year. If you

A Pastoral Prayer

By Albert Buckner Coe

COMFORT ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Every valley shall be exalted and every mountain and hill shall be made low; the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed.

We have come to claim Thy promise made in years that are gone, but eternal in its duration. Our valleys of despair are broad and endless. Our mountains of aspiration are rugged and steep. We scarcely know how to begin the journey that will take us to Thee—our stay in trial, our Rock in a weary land.

We would know Thee better. Is the trouble with us that we do not hear, or understand? Strengthen in us the spirit of meditation. May the mountains talk with us in silver tones of Thy glory. May Thy voice be audible in the stirring of the trees, the rippling of the brook, the song of the bird, the sound of a bell, the call of a fawn caught in the ticket, the cry of man's anguish. Speak to us that we may understand Thy love that passeth understanding—Thy joy that it may be in us, Thy hope that it may take possession of us.

Release us from our servitude to this world. We would not be bound by chains of selfishness, greed, thoughtlessness. We would not be surfeited of time and starved of the timeless. We would not set our eyes upon the past and fail to see the light that shines before us beckoning us to advance. We would not be earth-bound—rather we would be linked with the divine and catch Thy hand in the land of dreams.

In that spirit of complete abandon to Thyself we seek the ability to distinguish between the important and the trivial, the noble and the base, the excellent and the unworthy. May any consciousness of frustration in our personal hopes be lost in a new vision of the eternal. If our cherished plans have failed of fulfillment, if our high expectations have been shattered—if a loved one has gone from us into the shadows—may our disappointments vanish before Thy never failing love.

We would be linked with Thee through comradeship with men. May we walk in spirit with the disheartened, sharing their sorrows and acquainted with their grief. May we, with minds alert, aid in solving their problems. Help us to support those agencies of service and good will that seek the strengthening of men through satisfying employment and happy homes. May we uphold the hands of the President of the United States. We thank Thee for his courage as he brings his mind and heart to the solution of problems that perplex, almost unto despair, our own and all nations.

Thou Father of all men, bind us to Thyself through our service to our fellows.

Comfort us, comfort us, Thy people.

In the name of Christ. Amen.

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become ministers, you will get tired of writing two sermons a week, calling in the same homes, repeating the same truths, giving the same warning to the same people and seeing them disregard your truth and your warning week after week.

The monotony of constant reading and study to keep abreast of the times spoils many professional men. Many ministers, doctors, lawyers and teachers start out in their profession well, but they fail to study and keep up. They lose out in the race and success slips from their fingers. They fail, not because they do not have the ability but because they do not meet the test of endurance. Many young people start out in life with the ideal of making a success in music, art or literature. They face the monotony of hours, months and years of practice, and many of them lose their ideal when they face this test of endurance. Life is like a sieve, constantly moving, constantly shaking out the little things. The tragedy of so many lives is that they are made up of little things and after a little there is nothing left worth while. Truly it is said, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved."

In contrast to this demand for endurance is the popular ideal of the easy life of leisure. You will be tempted to take it easy. You will look ahead toward some goal of ease. Many people seem to think that when they get money enough they can retire with nothing to do, no responsibility, no work and no worry, and then they will be happy. Recently I visited an institution where about one hundred people had reached this goal. They have twenty-four hours of leisure each day. They have no work to perform, no responsibility, no worry. Food, shelter, clothing and the best of care is guaranteed them so long as they live. Is that the ideal toward which we are striving? No, a thousand times, no! Such an institution is the dread of every life. Every normal person has a fear that some day he may have to go to such a place, where he will have no work, no worry and no responsibility. Try your ideal by the test of endurance.

III. The Test of Comparison

In Washington, D. C., recently I saw the standard yardstick. If you buy a yard of cloth in Portland, Maine, San Francisco, Seattle or Miami, you will get exactly thirty-six inches, because every yardstick in every city of the United States is compared to this standard yardstick in Washington. So also every life must stand the test of comparison. You must compare your life, not with someone else who is doing less, not with others who have not the ability that you have. You must compare your life with your ideal, with what your life ought to be. That comparison will do one of two things for you:

First—as you compare your life with your ideal, it may discourage you; it may bring you to despair. You may ask, "What's the use?" and feel like giving up. Whenever I hear a great preacher like Gilkey, Cadman, Fosdick or Beaven, I often feel as if I ought to get a pick and shovel and never try to preach again. I know a young artist who had some ability, who had studied some and had some painting. One day he visited an art gallery and saw an exhibition of the work of a great artist. He went home, destroyed all his own work and never tried again. He could not stand the test of comparison. This the test of comparison may do to you, but it will not if you are made of the right kind of stuff.

And the second thing that comparison may do to you is to challenge you. There is the ideal; here is your life. You have not attained that ideal, but if you have been honest and if you are doing your best you are nearer that ideal than you were before. Your progress is just cause for pride. Therefore you can smile and strive on. When you see the work of a great architect it might be encouraging to you to see the first building that architect ever built. As you listen to a song by some great musician it might be interesting to hear the first song that musician ever sang. When you hear some great preacher who has many years of practice and experience behind him, it would be interesting to hear again his first sermon. Look at the first painting of that great artist. All these have had to meet the test of comparison. The fact that they have become successful shows that they have met this test and have not failed.

During my first year in the seminary I had a teacher who used to ask each man to prepare and preach a sermon for him. He would usually listen for four or five minutes, then put his hands over his ears and shout, "Oh stop! Don't say any more; it's awful!" That never helped any man's pride but it did help his preaching. They always came back for more and he helped them to become better preachers. He was simply emphasizing the contrast between what we were and what we might become. By doing this, this wise teacher helped us to meet the test of comparison. As you face the ideal of yourself as you might be and yourself as you are, are you discouraged, are you indifferent, or are you challenged to make your life better?

Could'st thou in vision see
The man God meant,
Thou nevermore would'st be
The man thou art, content.

IV. The Test of Sacrifice

Here is the hardest test of all. Sacrifice is the law of life. The price of progress is suffering and sacrifice. Life begins in agony and human life is sustained by sacrifice. Progress is made possible only by suffering. Scientists call it the survival of the fittest. Those forms of life less able to contribute to progress must make way for the more able and aggressive forms of life.

Intelligence reaches its full power through no easy path. Those who would mount upward must do so as the poet says, "by the light of the midnight oil." Every work of art that enriches our lives is of value because life blood has been poured into it. Every poem that moves us does so only because it represents struggle. Every scientific problem solved leaves behind it the wreckage of a severe battle that has cost much. Milton, paying for his poems with blindness; Mrs. Browning, drenching her work in the tears of suffering; Robert Louis Stevenson, writing between spasms of pain; Jesus, toiling up Calvary beneath his cross; these are all evidence of the law of sacrifice.

You young people must meet this test of sacrifice;

you cannot escape it, nor would I spare you if I could. Your physical, intellectual, moral and spiritual qualities must grow by exercise, and exercise always costs. If you did not meet this test you would not grow. The things that are most worth while are the things that have been tested by sacrifice. How did God prove his love to us? By the sacrifice of his son. How did Jesus prove his love and Saviorhood? By the sacrifice of his life. How did he say we were to prove our discipleship? By denying ourselves and taking up our cross. The deepest joys of life are those that are paid for by the deepest sorrow. Mother love, the holiest thing on earth, is paid for by suffering and the ordeal of pain.

Recall the virtues which we think of as especially Christian. Faith reminds us of Abraham, toiling up

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the hillside to sacrifice his only son. Meekness reminds us of Moses, who prayed that God would blot his name from the book of life unless his people could be forgiven. Fortitude brings to mind Stephen kneeling with a smile on his lips while the angry mob stoned him to death. The patience of Job was purchased by the loss of his family, his property and his health, which were all taken from him. Love takes us to a green hill outside a city wall where the supreme price of sacrifice was paid. Self-sacrifice is a distinctly Christian principle, and it is that which distinguishes Christianity from every other religion of the world. No other religion is based on self-denial. "Know thyself," said the Greek religions. "Assert thyself," said Mohammed. "Hide thyself," said Buddha. "Deny thyself," said Jesus. A candle has no glory and gives no light when it is not burning. A man amounts to nothing when he saves himself. The real test of life is self-sacrifice. The whole course of history proclaims the fact that the path of glory, honor and achievement is the path of self-denial. This is the most difficult test which you young people will have to meet. You must choose whether you will live your lives selfishly for what you may get or whether you will be big enough to live your lives for others. You must choose between being getters or givers.

In the Arabian Nights you will remember the story of the magnetic islands. These islands were so magnetic that when ships came near them they were wrecked. They were not drawn upon the rocks and dashed to pieces, nor was there any sudden explosion. These islands were simply so magnetic that they drew all the nails and bolts out of the ship and it fell to pieces. This is the test which self-sacrifice applies to every life. When a life has been lived on a principle of selfishness, as the years go by, sacrifice applies this test and that life falls to pieces and comes to sorrow. As the sieve of life moves constantly, the little things slip through and there is nothing left of a selfish life. I challenge you this morning to name any person who has attained any permanent degree of happiness who has not lived a life of self-denial.

The Challenge of the Best

Why do I spend this hour this Sunday morning in telling you these facts. They may be interesting to you, but that is not the reason. My purpose is not entertainment. I am speaking on these tests this morning simply because I want to bring a challenge to you young people. You have your lives before you; you want happiness. You want to accomplish something; you want your lives to be worth while. You want to do and to be something. This is the path you must follow. True religion, as well as true happiness, is giving the best that you have to the best that you know.

The best that you young people have is your life. The best that anyone knows is Jesus Christ. I am challenging you this morning to meet this test of self-sacrifice, to give yourselves to Christ. I shall be greatly disappointed as the months and the years go by if some of you do not give your lives in Christian service as ministers and missionaries, in social or educational service for Christ's kingdom.

I like to think of life as a market-place. Each young person comes to this great market-place with a life to exchange. Here on this side is the place where fortune is for sale and where the young person may exchange his life for things. Here is the place where popularity is for sale and where you may spend your life for the approval of men. In another place pleasure is for sale and you may exchange your life for enjoyment. Here is a place where fame is for sale and where you may give your life and receive in return the praises of men. Over there is a place marked "Others." There you may give your life and receive in return an opportunity to serve.

I can see a young man going about, stopping before each one of the places, trying to decide whether he shall give his life for fortune, pleasure, fame or service. He stops in front of each one and each bids for his life. Finally he stands before the choice of sacrificial service. As he stands there, considering how he shall spend his life, a hand is laid on his shoulder. It is a strong, cal-

loused hand, the hand of a workman. There is a scar in the palm of the hand, as though a nail had been driven through it, and there is a voice of infinite understanding and earnestness which says, "Come, follow me. He that saveth his life shall lose it. What shall it profit a man if he gain money, fame, reputation, yea the whole world, and lose his own soul, for what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Lights In The World

BY WILLARD B. THORP

A crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. Philippians 2:15.

IT is a confused world, my brothers! It has always been a confused world, but it did not see its confusion so clearly as it does today. In a sense the world may be said to have come to a consciousness of itself, and it discovers itself to be confused and bewildered.

Great sections of the universe are chaotic—stardust, desert, wilderness, desolation. The elements indeed are moving and arranging themselves under laws of mathematical precision, but anything like meaning we are unable to find.

In the human section of the world, which is the only section where we might hope to find meaning, the joyous paean of progress which the sons of the prophets were chanting some years ago is hardly audible today. In place of it is confusion and bewilderment, a stalemate. Men are going through the motions, but it is hard to say which way things are moving and whither! Russia, Germany, Japan, China, South America, our own land —everywhere, problems, confusion, bewilderment!

A Chaotic World

It is a chaotic world. But there are lights in it, points of light, and they are the significant things. There are some men who lived long ago, in times difficult enough, and their very names still radiate light down the ages. Of one such it was said, "He was a burning and shining light." The One who said it was himself an even greater light. There were some beautiful areas of light in ancient Egypt, but one by one they went out and the darkness shut in. There was a greater and more wonderful illumination in ancient Greece, which has been a permanent contribution. There were lights among the Hebrews—the glowing words of the psalmists and prophets of Israel are still a source of inspiration. That renegade Jew, Saul of Tarsus, who was so captivated with the story of Jesus and him crucified and risen from the dead, that he went up and down the earth gathering groups of people pledged to meet and worship in that name—he was a light. Someone has said: "Of all the men of antiquity, the one we really know best is not Caesar, not Cicero, but—Paul." He told those little groups of Christian believers that it was "a crooked and perverse generation," and that they must be "lights in it holding forth the word of life."

I do not know of any better word to set before you this morning than that word of Paul's: "a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world holding forth the word of life." He had no theory as to how this present world would be straightened out. He did not undertake to assert that it ever would be. In the midst of its confusion his aim was somehow to keep his own light shining, and to rejoice in those points of lights which he saw here and there, and which were many of them of his own kindling—little clusters of lights in Antioch and Philippi, in Salonika, in Ephesus, and even in Corinth, yes and in Rome whither he went as a prisoner. He found them everywhere. These to him were the significant things, and the historian looking back over the centuries sees that he was right.

An Ever-Shining Light

The great question for you and me is whether we too are "lights" in this confused generation. There is light in every one of us—the light of consciousness. And as I look into your faces I feel sure there is more than that. There is the light of Christ. Sometimes it burns low, this inner light. There are times of weariness, depression, nerve exhaustion, when it seems as if there were no light in us at all, as if our candle had gone out. But it hasn't. And when we wake in the morning our light is burning again, and we go forth with it shining—not only the light of consciousness but the divine inner light of Christ. We go forth into the world; we see other lights all about us, cheerful, smiling faces, deeds of kindness, glimpses of friendly humor; and we ourselves join in the chorus of cheer. We do not know what the world is coming to; we do not know when and how the times are going to be better—we do not know any of those things. But we know enough to keep our light shining, our candle burning. And we go about among others, and perhaps sometimes they light their candles at ours when we do not know it—even as we do at theirs. What indeed should we do without each other! "Nor knowest thou what argument thy life to thy neighbor's creed hath lent."

For one thing, however difficult our personal situation may be in some respects, there are always others around us who are worse off in some way or other. And that fact in itself ought to save us from being wholly absorbed in ourselves, which is the way most people lose their souls. It would be hard to find anybody who is quite deprived of the privilege of doing something for somebody else. Even a bedridden invalid can often keep a fire burning that others are glad to come and sit by. ("May I come in and sit awhile by your fire and enjoy your company?" "You certainly may, and welcome.") Sometimes it is a relief to talk things over, to tell our story to a sympathetic ear—although it is a luxury in which one should not often indulge, for the rehashing of a familiar tale of woe is one of the most common forms of boredom. But what I started to say is, that some of the kindest and most helpful people in the world are among the destitute. The poor themselves are the greatest helpers of the poor. The most wonderful lights in the world are those that are kept burning in spite of difficulties. And the really saddest thing in the world is not

poverty, by any means. The saddest thing is to have one's light go out; for that is death in life.

The things that put our light out, what are they? Pride: how often our pride keeps us from doing the simple, natural, genuine thing, and shuts our best self tight up within us where it cannot shine. And back of pride is fear; indeed is not pride always based on fear, fear of what others will think or say? The One whom we call the Light of the world was free from both pride and fear.

Then there is self-absorption—we have just spoken of that. The life that is shut in to itself, its little circle of personal aims and interests, cannot give out its light, and light that does not radiate soon is lost. And there is envy, which is one of the self-centered traits. And with

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it goes snobbery, which measures people by what they have or what they wear, or the position they are supposed to hold. And with it goes the desire-to-show-off, to "compensate" for some supposed inferiority, to attain something that is called prestige. All those artificial things help to extinguish one's light. They grow upon one and become a deadly habit. One of the reasons for keeping close company with Jesus is that there is something about him that sets us free from all these light-killing qualities; they cannot survive in his presence. I think that is why he had such an aversion to the love of money. Not so much the possession of money as the love of it. And the love of it is apt to be keenest in those who haven't much of it.

And then there is contempt—a cynical attitude toward the life about us, an imputation of the lowest and cheapest motives, a naming of people by what seem to us to be their foibles or faults. Through that habit of mind the light cannot shine. If we find ourselves incapable of warm and generous appreciation, if we are always fault-finding and never praising, it is a sign that we are in a bad way. It begins with contempt of our neighbors, and it grows until it involves the whole universe and becomes a sneer at God himself. When we have ceased to be able to "praise God from whom all blessings flow," it is surely a sign that our light is going out.

But let us say no more of things like these, and turn for our closing thought to things that keep the light that is in us from becoming darkness.

Two Things Worth While

Two things there are that make life worth living. One of them is the accumulation of treasure, the inner treasure, which is of course the only kind that we really possess. It consists of the acquisition of knowledge, of truth that we have discovered and verified and made our own; the acquisition of taste and judgment, the ability to recognize what is fine and excellent and to delight in it. That is the real reward we get from our work: the more we do it the more we recognize the difference of quality in our output. The more directions in which we have acquired discernment and good taste, wisdom, the greater is our treasure. We carry it with us wherever we go, and as the years accumulate it makes our life more and more a treasure-ship indeed, laden with riches far surpassing the galleons of Spain.

The other thing is love, good will—and with it appreciation of the beauty and the mystery and the glory in the midst of which we are. This is the quality that makes a person a light, a living radiance. It is an indescribable thing, this radiant quality. It is mingled with the play of humor, with genial friendliness, with quick sympathy, with large tolerance, and with the joy of life. It makes a person lovable, and to be lovable is the very mark of divine grace. There is surely something the matter with us if people do not love us. We have let some hardness perhaps, some defiance, come between us and them. We have been on the defensive. We have not trusted them. I can think of persons who have the light in them, they are all beautiful within; but something of that sort has frosted the windows and kept others from seeing it. They have the light, its inner beauty; but something has hurt them, and they have not the joy that comes from its free outshining. Let your light shine.

Of Such Is the Kingdom

And so I come back to those words which are our text: "A crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world holding forth the word of life."

We cannot understand the world; we cannot explain why this and that happens as it does; we cannot read the signs of the times; we cannot make the world over. But no matter—we can at least keep our light shining. We can be simple and genuine ourselves, and we can love people, and show them our love by the things we do for them. And if we do that, it will be said of us by the only One whose judgment matters: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."

What Makes Preaching Vital?

BY HAROLD W. RUOPP

THE words "vital" and "vitality" come from the Latin *vita,* meaning "life." Vital preaching is characterized by the fact that it is *life-giving.* Such preaching will make a difference to the thinking and the living of the people who hear it. No one will be inclined to say, "Well, what of it?" (a reaction, by the way, which is felt far more than it is expressed). Rather they are likely to say exactly what Peter's listeners said to him after his sermon at Pentecost: "What shall we do?" Certainly, we who are preachers cannot accept as the grand aim of our preaching anything less than influencing human behavior in terms of the life and teaching, the essential attitudes and spirit, of the Man of Galilee. To fall short of that is to miss the mark of vitality.

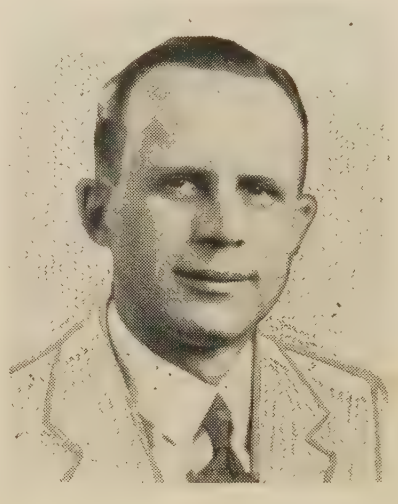
Of the many principles which make for vital and effective preaching, four are especially important. They are so significant indeed that they might almost be called axioms of preaching.

• *The Life Behind The Sermon*

First, and foremost, the preacher must have something on the inside if his preaching is to affect life. That "something" may be variously defined: convictions about essential matters, contact with reality, the distillation of the God-spirit in the alembic of the preacher's soul. He who has it is able to say with St. Paul, "I *know* whom I have believed." Obvious as this may seem, it yet needs to be emphasized. It is this which puts the "plus" element into preaching. There is finally no substitute for it, and no amount of anything else will compensate for its lack.

Jesus is reported to have said to Peter, "Feed my sheep"—a good charge for all the spiritual successors of that great disciple. But sheep cannot be fed if the shepherd has no food; nor guided if he has no sense of direction; nor saved from the abyss into which their foibles may tumble them if he has no courage. Once let people make the discovery that the preacher himself is living a lie—preaching that which he himself does not have—and all his pious platitudes, however beautifully they may be worded and however effectively they may be illustrated, become vapid and meaningless. Little wonder that Paul should have opened his great love-song with the words: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal."

Phillips Brooks liked to define preaching as "the transmission of truth through personality." In the abstract, I presume, truth is truth; but it does not become aglow or alive, until it is incarnated in, and mediated by, a human messenger, who himself is on fire. The transmission of truth through personality! The medium therefore is everlastingly important. Light shines more clearly when it comes through clean and unstained windows.



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The major question by which every preacher must check himself is not, Can I preach? but rather, What do I have that's worth preaching? The answer to the question will depend upon how honest a man is with himself.

If this first principle is self-evident, so also is the second. It may be stated thus: Between the call to preach and vital, life-giving, preaching lies an immense amount of rigorous and never-ending self-discipline.

• *Self-Discipline a Path to Power*

The call to preach is important, especially when the call has not lost its freshness. The great English preacher Spurgeon used to say: "I am as much called to preach the gospel as Paul was." Important however as the call is, it is not enough. That would make this preaching business too easy. Something more is needed—endless reading, study, prayer; the cultivation of mind, heart and voice (the preacher's "trinity"); the correction of unfortunate professional mannerisms, which insinuate themselves so often into preaching and get in the way of the message which is being presented.

Bobby Jones is a golfer *par excellence,* but Bobby Jones did not get his ability to drive, approach, and putt lying in bed till nine o'clock in the morning, peddling civilities in the corner drug-store, or reading magazine articles on "How It's Done."

Several years ago, Rachmaninoff came to Boston for a concert. He wired ahead, so I am told, to a piano company in the city requesting permission to use a piano at the sales-room on the day preceding his concert. Hearing of this, a group of music lovers came to hear the great artist play. From a room across the hall, unbeknown to the pianist, they listened. And across the hall, all day long, Rachmaninoff played —not a single composition, only scales.

Paderewski's comment is in point: "If I cease practicing for a day, I notice it; for a week, my critics notice it; for a month, my audiences notice it."

With most of us, if not all of us, preaching must be a science before it can become an art. A science uses the rules and is conscious of their application; an art, while it uses the rules, is no longer conscious of them. because they have become ingrained, habitual. Most of us, I repeat, will have to pass through the scientific stage in our preaching—the stage in which we discover what is best and then strive consciously to apply that to ourselves. Gradually the best will become a part of us, and we move out into the higher, the artistic, level. But of one thing we may be sure, that conquest is no easy matter—and there is no short-cut to it. In preaching as in everything else we become free only when we have first been obedient.

• *Preaching Must be "People-Centered"*

Once more, preaching to be vital must be a transcript of experience, and not vague theories about it. It must come out of life if it is in turn to affect life. Effective preaching in its approach must be objective; it must appreciate and understand the great driving forces in the hearts of humankind, it must enter into the mighty leveling experiences of men and women. Vital preaching is *life-situation* preaching.

Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick writing on "What Is the Matter With Preaching?" in Harper's Magazine, puts it succinctly: "Every problem that the preacher faces thus leads back to one basic question: how well does he

understand the thoughts and lives of his people? That he should know his gospel goes without saying, but he may know it ever so well and yet fail to get within reaching distance of anybody unless he intimately understands people and cares more than he cares for anything else what is happening inside of them. Preaching is wrestling with individuals over questions of life and death, and until that idea of it commands a preacher's mind and method, eloquence will avail him little and theology not at all."

Universal sympathy thus becomes a *sine qua non* of vital preaching. No one can possibly come into the life of his listeners unless, in imagination, he is able to live the life of his listeners. Thus, by living all lives, "he is able to distinguish that which appeals to all from that which appeals to a few, and in great moments can touch with deft sureness a universal chord."

It needs now to be added that he who is genuinely people-centered in his preaching approach will have no fear as to the size of his congregations. Men will come, because they realize that he who speaks to them knows their fears and hopes, their joys and sorrows, their weakness and strength, their aspirations and frustrations. Understanding them, he is able to define and clarify what they themselves vaguely and inarticulately feel, think, want, and need. He becomes, to use St. Bernard's fine phrase, "eyes to the blind, a tongue to the dumb."

• *The Common-to-All Needs of Humanity*

We are brought finally to a corollary of this third principle, but it is so important that it should be permitted to stand in its own right. It is this: Experience brings men to a common level. There are certain great drives, certain outstanding needs, certain fundamental desires, certain life-situations which are universally experienced, regardless of creed or class, sex, nation or color. The desire for food, love, friends, recognition, power, security; discouragement, fear, frustration, temptations of one kind or another; heartaches and smiles, joys and sorrows, birth and death—these, and others, are no respecters of persons.

Once we grasp the deep significance of this universality of experience, the knowledge that people everywhere are people (all intensely human and underneath very much alike)—our preaching will be mightily affected for the good.

The stratifications of our modern civilization—racially, socially, intellectually—are highly artificial. Crack the veneer, get beneath the masks which people wear when they are in public, and the common-to-all soon becomes apparent. That which binds human beings together is vastly greater than that which separates them. Preaching becomes vital therefore exactly in proportion as it makes its appeal to all "classes." The implications of this thought are so obvious that they need not be explicitly stated.

Timely Verse

Who Will Build the World Anew?

WHO will build the world anew?
Who will break tradition's chains?
Who will smite the power of gold?
Who will chant the Spirit's gains?

War and hatred, let them go!
Caste and creed have had their day;
Pride and lust will lose their power—
Who will find the better way?

Who will preach that might is weak?
Who will teach that love is power?
Who will hail the reign of right?
This his day and this his hour!

Faithless priests and warring lords
Are as Babylon and Tyre,
Making way for prophet hosts
Shouting truth in words of fire.

Who will live to slay the false?
Who will die to prove the true?
Who will claim the earth for God?
Who will build the world anew?

THOMAS CURTIS CLARK.

Ascent

DELVE not so deep in the gloomy past
That life's bright sands cave in and bury thee;
Better it is to make a ladder fast
Against a star, and climb eternally.

CHARLES G. BLANDEN.

To Young Dreamers

ABOVE dark cities build
Your tall, impossible towers,
Imperious towers of faith
Built perilously high,
And gather your dreams like clusters
Of strange, bewildering flowers
From the star-bright ledges
Of the wide, impossible sky!

LUCIA TRENT.

We Shall Build On!

WE shall build on!
On through the cynic's scorning.
On through the coward's warning.
On through the cheat's suborning.
We shall build on!

Firm on the Rock of Ages,
City of saints and sages.
Laugh while the tempest rages,
We shall build on!

Christ, though my hands be bleeding,
Fierce though my flesh be pleading,
Still let me see Thee leading,
Let me build on!

Till through death's cruel dealing,
Brain wrecked and reason reeling,
I hear Love's trumpets pealing,
And I pass on.

G. A. STUDDERT-KENNEDY.

WHO'S WHO in THIS ISSUE

DURING *his long period of service* as professor of oriental languages and literature at the University of Chicago, DR. HERBERT L. WILLETT became widely known as an interpreter of biblical literature to our own day, and he has put some of the results of his studies into his book. "The Bible Through the Centuries." His new book, "The Jew Through the Centuries," is being widely welcomed as the most authoritative of all books on the subject now available. Dr. Willett was for many years dean of the Disciples divinity house of the University of Chicago, and he has also held a pastorate during most of his teaching career. He now ministers to the Union church at Kenilworth, a suburb of Chicago. He has for many years been a contributing editor of The Christian Century. He was the founder and for several years the executive secretary of the Chicago church federation.

Receiving his A. B. degree from Harvard in 1913, Rev. ROGER EDDY TREAT continued his studies at Andover seminary, where he was awarded the S.T.B. degree in 1916. Since 1926, Dr. Treat has been minister of the Bushnell Congregational church, Detroit; earlier pastorates were at East Windsor and Salisbury, Conn.

A mighty preacher and prophet was Rev. ALFRED W. WISHART, who passed from this life a few weeks ago in Grand Rapids, Mich., where he had for 27 years led the activities of the Fountain Street Baptist church. His was a great church, and his messages, timely and powerful as they were, had a hearing far beyond his own city and state. When Dr. Wishart first came to Grand Rapids, he preached from the text, "For I am determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ, and him crucified," and on every anniversary since he had preached from that text. Shortly before his death, Dr. Wishart sent the editor of the Pulpit the sermon which is printed in this issue.

It is sufficient to say of Rev. M. H. LICHLITER that since 1924 he has carried on, with grace and power, at First Congregational church, Columbus, O., where for a score of years Washington Gladden ministered. Dr. Lichliter was originally a Methodist minister, and held a number of Methodist pastorates, among them prominent charges in St. Louis, Baltimore and Cleveland. Before going to Columbus, he was minister of Central Congregational church, Newton, Mass.

About two years ago the editor of The Christian Century Pulpit asked the presidents of the leading theological seminaries to name recent graduates of their institutions who had started out in their preaching careers with most success and promise. Rev. CHARLES F. BANNING was awarded this honor by the head of Colgate-Rochester seminary. A sermon was contributed by him to a special young ministers' number, along with contributions from six other ministers who had been named by their schools. Dr. Banning graduated from Colgate-Rochester in 1925. He has for a number of years ministered to the Baptist church at Richmond Hill, N. Y.

Rev. WILLARD B. THORP *was educated at Amherst and at Yale divinity school. He was ordained in the Congregational ministry in 1891, and has held pastorates in Binghampton, N. Y., Chicago, San Diego and Palo Alto, Cal. He has led the activities of First Congregational church, Palo Alto, since 1920.*

Rev. ALBERT BUCKNER COE *is minister of the First Congregational church, Oak Park, Ill.*

Dr. HAROLD W. RUOPP *is professor of the art of preaching in Boston university school of theology and Andover Newton theological school.*

TITLES AND TEXTS

What Pulpit Readers are Preaching About

ERNEST E. YOUTZ, Tomkins Avenue Congregational, Brooklyn. "Seekers and Sought." Job 23:3—"O that I knew where I might find him."

FOR YOUR SERMON TITLE AND TEXT

. . . . . .

Title of sermon

. . . . . .

Text used (Write out the text)

. . . . . .

Name of minister

. . . . . .

Name of church

. . . . . .

Address

L. B. MOSELEY, First Baptist, Madison, Wis. "The Eternal Hide and Seek." Prov. 25:2—"It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: But the glory of Kings is to search out the matter."

CLARENCE G. LANGLEY, First Presbyterian, Red Wing, Minn. "A Divine Proposal to a Depressed People." 2 Chron. 7:14—"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land."

CECIL E. HAWORTH, College Ave. Friends, Oskaloosa, Ia. "Sham Battles." 1 Cor. 9:26—"So fight I, as not beating the air."

WILLIAM H. WRIGHT, First Methodist, Ord, Neb. "Thinking Things Over With God." Isa. 1:18—"Come now and reason together, saith the Lord."

The Editor's Page

The Event of the Month

WHATEVER may be the outcome of the disarmament conference now meeting at Geneva, it is agreed around the world that President Roosevelt's forthright message to all nations relieved a situation of great tension and cleared the air for a fresh attack upon the problem. The rise of Hitler to the dictatorship of Germany had brought with it new fears as to Germany's intentions in respect to re-arming and the repudiation of the Versailles treaty. Public opinion in England and the United States, which had been growing more favorable to Germany for the past five years, suddenly hardened with fear and wrath when Hitler began to exercise his power with internal ruthlessness and external threat. Mr. Roosevelt's message was designed to give Hitler an opportunity either to conciliate the world or to defy the world. The dictator rose to his opportunity in a masterly speech of conciliation and cooperation, the effect of which has been that Roosevelt's warning has been shifted from Germany and focused upon France. A new attitude toward Germany now obtains. The disarmament conference is working in a more hopeful spirit, and the United States shows signs of taking its fair share of responsibility in assuring world peace.

The President Revives Disarmament Hopes

The Book of the Month

THE PLAIN MAN SEEKS FOR GOD, *by Henry P. Van Dusen. Scribners, $2.00.*

BOOKS on God are coming thick and fast. An active reorientation of religious thought is now going on. The intellectual attitude of the most potent minds in our time makes belief in God far easier than it has been for more than a generation. Mr. Van Dusen senses and reports the passing of so-called "humanism," though he rightly sees that it will continue to color the thinking of many people for some time to come. He holds that God's existence will be more and more taken as a fact, and the great problem in religious thought will be to discover and exhibit the nature or character of God. From the question, "Is There A God?" we are proceeding, he says, to the question, "What is God Like?" The book divides itself into two parts, a consideration of the kind of universe revealed by modern science and philosophy, and a consideration of the realm of values—whether or not "values" are just the projection of our subjective feelings or are objectively real. His discussion of this second question is vivid and highly instructive. Particularly valuable is the interpretation of Kant and the stream of philosophical thought which flows from him. Mr. Van Dusen almost succeeds in making the cosmology of Whitehead and Jeans and Eddington clear to the "plain man," but there is no question about his success in making Kant clear. I could have wished that the author had made more precise use of his distinction between God's existence and God's nature by presenting a conception of God whose existence is beyond dispute, and then with strict logical steps unfolding his argument for God's nature as living and personal and loving and redemptive. If God's existence is beyond dispute, I do not see why we should bother with an existential argument drawn from science and philosophy, albeit light might come from these fields showing us what kind of a God he is. The book is a delight to read. With rare insight it faces a hundred problems which ministers confront in their parishes as well as in their own souls.

A Thought for the Month

THE preëminent place given to preaching in our modern Protestant churches has betrayed us into an unhappy psychology with respect to the act of worship. Our people are likely to go to church in order to hear the minister discuss the problems of religion. They are presumed to be interested in discovering, for example, whether there is a God or not, and they go to church to find out. When this curiosity does not exist, either because a world outlook has been adopted which makes no place for God, or because faith in God has become established beyond all question, our kind of church services do not seem to make a sufficiently authoritative appeal. Therefore, church attendance becomes irregular, desultory, and casually optional. The present generation is thus not developing the habit of worship. I wonder if the prevailing conception on which our services of worship are constructed is not religiously unsound. Is the worship service the true place to discuss theological questions? Should not the act of worship be deliberately freed from the distractions of doubt concerning God and given a setting and an atmosphere of certitude and finality. I grow increasingly to believe that it should be so. We Protestants, I fear, unlike our Catholic brethren, and the Christian Scientists, and the Quakers, go to church more to hear the preacher than to meet God. If there is truth in this observation I imagine it will call for some radical reconstruction both of our liturgy and our preaching. There is a place for the freest kind of discussion and instruction in theology. But there ought also to be some public gathering where those who believe in God can come and worship him in a service where his existence is taken for granted, where his holy will and his providential guidance are assumed as the supreme reality. Such a gathering the service of worship ought to be.

Worshiping God or Talking About Him

Charles Clayton Morrison

Keep Out of Ruts!

READ THE CHRISTIAN CENTURY PULPIT

A Los Angeles reader of the Pulpit, in a recent communication, strikes a note which frequently appears in letters from Pulpit subscribers. He says: "A publication like The Christian Century Pulpit, whose contributions are drawn from over the face of the earth, keeps one from falling into a rut."

There are some ministers, sad to say, who like the ease and comfort of "ruts." They do not like to be "challenged" by ideas which are different from their own "tried and true" notions. But such ministers are growing fewer. Preachers are becoming prophetic. They are reading the messages of their fellow-preachers, to "get the trend" of the best preaching. They are following, month by month, The Christian Century Pulpit.

In the July Pulpit

There will be a timely sermon in next month's Pulpit by Rev. Henry S. Leiper of the Federal Council of Churches, on "The Christian's Declaration of Independence", and another straightforward message by Rev. W. R. Moody, of St. Mark's Episcopal church, Washington, D. C., which closes with this pertinent sentence: "There is but one cure for our Country's ills—a return to the moral teachings of Jesus Christ."

The sermon by Rev. George Lawrence Parker, on "Man's Second Chance"—which was announced for the June issue—will also appear next month. Also Rev. George A. Buttrick's sermon recently preached at the Chicago Sunday Evening club—entitled "Airplane Thoughts on Religion." And a sermon on "A World of Persons" by Douglas Horton. And still others—all genuine *messages*.

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